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UNCLAS KATHMANDU 000880

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SA/INS
LONDON FOR POL - GURNEY
NSC FOR MILLARD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV NP_GON
SUBJECT: NEPALI PRIME MINISTER THAPA RESIGNS

REF: KATHMANDU 845 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) At 3:00 p.m. local time Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa announced his resignation in a national radio broadcast. No immediate announcement of a successor has been made.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: A coalition of five democratic parties have held near-daily rallies against Thapa's government since April 1 and have been protesting his appointment by the King as illegitimate since he first took office in June 2003. The parties have been demanding Thapa's resignation as a precondition to beginning talks with King Gyanendra aimed at forming a multi-party government (Reftel). The King has indicated, both directly to the Embassy and through intermediaries, that he was considering a change in government. He had to keep the Thapa government intact, however, long enough to host the Nepal Development Forum May 5-6 . With the Development Forum now safely over, we expect the King to announce a new Prime Minister within the next few days.

BOGUE